

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 3802

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, PORG, WA, SF
SUBJ: SWAPO ON A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT

1. SUMMARY: IN AN INFORMAL CONVERSATION DECEMBER 13, MEMBERS OF SWAPO TOOK AN UNYIELDING POSITION ON SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS IN NAMIBIA, MAINTAINED THAT SWAPO'S MAJOR CONCESSION IN AGREEING TO ELECTIONS MUST NOW BE MET BY CONCESSIONS BY SOUTH AFRICA AND SAID RELEASE OF SHIPANGA WOULD CREATE MAJOR INTERNAL PROBLEMS FOR SWAPO. END SUMMARY.

2. AT A SOCIAL OCCASIONS EMBOFFS DECEMBER 13 DISCUSSED NAMIBIA SETTLEMENT WITH SWAPO REP TO UN THEO-BEN GURIRAB AND DIRECTOR OF NAMIBIA INSTITUTE HAGE GEINGOB.

3. GURIRAB STARTED OFF BY SAYING THAT SWAPO COULD NOT AGREE TO ELECTIONS AS LONG AS ANY SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS REMAINED IN NAMIBIA. THEN, IN WHAT MAY HAVE BEEN AN UNGUARDED STATEMENT, HE SAID ELECTIONS COULD NOT BE HELD AS LONG AS THERE WERE A "SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER" OF SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS IN NAMIBIA. GURIRAB SAID THAT SOUTH AFRICA'S DEMAND THAT 3000 TROOPS REMAIN AND BE
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DISTRIBUTED IN THE NORTH PROVES THAT SAG IS NOT SERIOUS IN WANTING A SETTLEMENT, AND SWAPO HAS BEEN PROVEN RIGHT IN HOLDING OUT FOR COMPLETE TROOP WITHDRAWAL.

4. GEINGOB AND GURIRAB ARGUED THAT SWAPO HAD NOT TAKEN A HARD LINE IN ITS DEALINGS WITH THE CONTACT GROUP. SWAPO HAD AGREED TO ELECTIONS, AND THIS WAS A MAJOR CONCESSION GIVEN SWAPO'S

INTERNATIONAL STATUS AS THE LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE OF NAMIBIA. SWAPO HAD THE RIGHT TO SIMPLY DEMAND THAT POWER BE TRANSFERRED TO IT. INSTEAD SWAPO HAD CHOSEN TO COMPROMISE AND ACCEPT ELECTIONS; IT IS NOW UP TO THE CONTACT GROUP TO GET SOUTH AFRICA TO AGREE TO SWAPO'S CONDITIONS FOR A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION. EMBOFFS SUGGESTED THAT CONTACT GROUP APPROACH MIGHT BE PREFERABLE TO AND QUICKER THAN COUNTING ON UN RECOGNITION AS A WAY TO ENSURE THAT SWAPO GAINS POWER IN NAMIBIA. THIS PROVOKED AN EMOTIONAL RESPONSE -- "SWAPO IS PREPARED TO FIGHT AS THE VIETNAMESE HAD FOR A THOUSAND YEARS FOR GENUINE INDEPENDENCE AND WOULD NOT BE CONTENT WITH SHAM INDEPENDENCE."

5. GEINGOB AND GURIRAB ARGUED THAT, IN AGREEING TO DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CONTACT GROUP, SAG HAD BEEN SETTING THE STAGE TO LAY BLAME ON SWAPO FOR THE FAILURE TO ARRIVE AT A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. SWAPO RECOGNIZES THIS MAY HAPPEN AND THAT IT COULD LOSE A LOT OF FRIENDS AND SUPPORT, INCLUDING THAT OF KEY FRONTLINE STATES, BUT PRINCIPLE IS MORE IMPORTANT. TRUE INDEPENDENCE EVENTUALLY WILL COME -- THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES.

6. GEINGOB REJECTED OUT OF HAND ANY SUGGESTION THAT SWAPO COULD SHOW MORE FLEXIBILITY ON THE RELEASE OF SWAPO DETAINEES IN TANZANIA. IN BRINGING UP THE RELEASE OF SWAPO DETAINEES, THE CONTACT GROUP WAS FAVORING SOUTH AFRICA. SWAPO COULD NEVER AGREE TO THEIR RELEASE. SWAPO HAD ALREADY SHOWN GREAT FORBEARANCE IN NOT EXECUTING SHIPANGA AND HIS FOLLOWERS. TO AGREE TO THEIR

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RELEASE WOULD CREATE MAJOR INTERNAL PROBLEMS FOR SWAPO. FRIENDS AND RELATIVES OF THOSE WHO HAD BEEN KILLED BY SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS, ALLEGEDLY SUPPLIED WITH INFORMATION BY SHIPANGA, WOULD RISE UP IN REVOLT AGAINST THE SWAPO LEADERSHIP. WHEN EMBOFF ADVANCED THE IDEA THAT SWAPO REFUSAL TO EVEN CONSIDER THE RELEASE OF SHIPANGA GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE SWAPO ORGANIZATION WAS FRAGILE, GEINGOB RATHER SURPRISINGLY ADMITTED THAT THIS WAS TRUE.

7. COMMENT: THERE WAS A DEFENSIVE QUALITY AS WELL AS AN EMOTIONAL APPROACH TO ISSUES WHICH WE HAVE NOT ENCOUNTERED IN SUCH AN EXAGGERATED FORM ON THE PART OF SWAPO IN THE PAST. WE WERE LEFT WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT GEINGOB AND GURIRAB MIGHT BE TROUBLED BY THE THOUGHT THAT SWAPO HAD MISSED THE BOAT. GEINGOB'S COMMENTS ON THE FRAGILITY OF SWAPO IS THE MOST FORTHRIGHT CONFIRMATION TO DATE OF WHAT WE HAVE KNOWN TO BE TRUE. LOW

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